

PART 2060 - PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Subpart A - FmHA Performance Appraisal

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Part 2060 - PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Subpart A - FmHA PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

§2060.1 Authority.

This Instruction prescribes the procedures and policy for the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) Performance Management System (PMS). This Instruction, along with Department Personnel Manual (DPM) Chapter 430 - Performance Appraisal, constitute the Performance Appraisal Plan for all FmHA employees except those excluded by law or regulation. Specific provisions and procedures governing performance appraisal for Senior Executive Service (SES) employees are located in OPM Chapter 430. This plan has been approved by the Office of Personnel, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as being in conformance with DPM Chapter 430. A copy of this approval is included in Exhibit C of this Instruction.

§2060.2 Purpose.

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that performance appraisal is used as a tool for executing basic management and supervisory responsibilities by:

- (a) Communicating and clarifying agency goals and objectives;
- (b) Identifying individual accountability for the accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives;
- (c) Evaluating and improving individual and organizational accomplishments;
- (d) Using performance rating as a basis for rewarding employees and for other personnel actions.

"Fully Successful" performance is the expected level of performance under this plan.

§2060.3 Definitions.

The following definitions are applicable to the FmHA PMS and other personnel systems involving the use of performance appraisals:

DISTRIBUTION: W,S,D,C

Personnel
Performance Ratings

RD Instruction 2060-A
§2060.3 (Con.)

- (a) Appraisal. The act or process of reviewing and evaluating the performance of an employee against the described performance standard(s), including oral or written progress reviews.
- (b) Appraisal period. The period of time established by an appraisal system for which an employee's performance will be reviewed.
- (c) Appraisal system. The method used to identify critical and noncritical elements; establish performance standards; communicate elements and standards to employees; establish methods and procedures to appraise performance against established standards; and provide appropriate use of appraisal information in making personnel decisions.
- (d) Appraisal unit. The unit of measure used to establish the relative weighted value of critical and noncritical elements.
- (e) Critical element. A component of a position consisting of one or more duties and responsibilities which contributes toward accomplishing organizational goals and objectives. A critical element is of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in unacceptable performance in the position.
- (f) Decision table. A matrix used for deriving a rating from appraisal of individual elements.
- (g) Element rating. The level of performance on an individual element which is determined by comparing accomplishments to the performance standard. Element rating levels are: "Exceeds Fully Successful," "Fully Successful," and "Does Not Meet" the "Fully Successful" level.
- (h) Noncritical element. A component of an employee's position which does not meet the definition of a critical element, but is of sufficient importance to warrant written appraisal and the assignment of an element rating.
- (i) Performance. A employee's accomplishment of assigned work or duties and responsibilities as specified in the critical and noncritical elements of the employee's position.
- (j) Performance Management System. The total process of integrating performance, pay, and incentive systems with

basic management functions for the purpose of improving individual and organizational effectiveness in the accomplishment of Agency mission and goals. Basic to the foundation of performance management is the performance appraisal process.

(k) Performance plan. The aggregation of all an employee's written critical and noncritical elements and performance standard(s).
(Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(l) Performance standard. A statement of the expectations or requirements established by management for a critical or noncritical element at a particular rating level. A performance standard may include, but is not limited to, factors such as quality, quantity, cost-efficiency, timeliness, and manner of performance.
(Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(m) Progress review. A review of the employee's progress toward achieving the performance standards, and is not in itself a rating.
(Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(n) Rating of record. The summary rating required at the time specified in this Performance Appraisal Plan, or at such other times as specified for special circumstances. (Revised and renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(o) Summary rating. The written record of overall performance and the appraisal of each critical and noncritical element and the assignment of a summary rating level. Summary rating levels are "Outstanding," "Superior," "Fully Successful," "Marginal," and "Unacceptable."
(Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(p) Unacceptable performance. Performance of an employee which fails to meet established "Fully Successful" performance standards in one or more critical elements of the employee's position.
(Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

§2060.4 Responsibilities.

(a) The Administrator is responsible for ensuring that performance appraisals are conducted in accordance with the requirements set forth in this plan.

(b) The Assistant Administrator for Human Resources, is delegated responsibility for the administration of the procedures of this system.

(c) Employees are responsible for participating in the identification of performance elements and standards and performing assigned duties and responsibilities in accordance with these standards.

(d) Supervisors are responsible for using the performance appraisal process as a continuing tool in managing the daily work routine. Supervisors are responsible for carrying out the specific procedural requirements of this Instruction as they relate to:

- (1) The establishment of performance elements and standards;
- (2) Providing feedback to employees about their performance;
- (3) Conducting progress reviews and formal appraisal interviews;
- (4) Taking or recommending appropriate personnel actions based on performance appraisals.

(e) Reviewing officials are responsible for ensuring that the performance appraisal process is used in a manner consistent with the provisions of this Instruction. Specifically, they must ensure that:

- (1) Performance standards and elements adequately reflect appropriate levels of quality and difficulty of performance; and
- (2) Performance ratings are accurate, consistent and equitable throughout the organization.

§2060.5 Coverage.

The requirements of this Instruction apply to all employees of the Agency except:

- (a) Those employees excluded by 5 U.S.C. 4301 (2), except members of the SES;
- (b) Employees in noncareer executive positions filled under 5 CFR, Part 305;
- (c) Positions in the excepted service for which employment is not reasonably expected to exceed 120 calendar days in a consecutive 12-month period;
- (d) Employees in the following positions when filled by appointments limited to 1 year or less, or when employees are serving on intermittent tours of duty: (Revised 03-20-96, PN 259.)
 - (1) Seasonal positions in Alaska filled under 5 CFR 213.3113 (c)(2).
 - (2) Temporary positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3113(e)(3) when occupied by individuals whose principal duties involving making and servicing natural disaster emergency loans. (Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)
 - (3) Positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(g). (Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)
 - (4) Positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(k) when occupied by employees to whom no compensation is paid. (Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)
 - (5) Positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(l) when occupied by scientific, professional, or technical experts for consultation purposes. (Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)
 - (6) Positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(o) when occupied by faculty members. (Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)
 - (7) Positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(p) when occupied by graduate students. (Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(8) Positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(q) when occupied by students working intermittently or on a part-time basis while attending school. However, this exclusion does not apply to any position occupied by a cooperative student who may become eligible for noncompetitive conversion to a competitive service appointment. (Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(9) Positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(v) when occupied by temporary summer aids. (Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(10) Seasonal positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(y) when occupied by finalists in national science contests. (Renumbered 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(e) The following positions when filled by individuals who are expected to work less than 120 consecutive calendar days for the same supervisor under an appointment limited to 1 year or less:
(Revised 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(1) Positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(m) when occupied by custodians or general laborers.

(2) Positions filled under 5 CFR 213.3102(w) when occupied by students appointed under the Stay-in-School Campaign.

(f) Although the above groups of employees are exempt from the requirements of this Instruction, that exemption does not prohibit supervisors from maintaining records of work, nor does it prevent supervisors from recommending or taking administrative action involving such personnel.

(g) Inclusion of managers, supervisors, and employees occupying Schedule C positions does not extend to those employees any rights established under Chapter 43 of Title 5, U.S.C.

§2060.6 Obligations under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71 Labor-management relations.

Offices are required to negotiate or consult with recognized labor organizations concerning appropriate aspects of this performance appraisal system.

§2060.7 Performance planning.

All performance appraisals will be based on individual performance plans which consist of critical and noncritical elements and performance standards.

(a) Preparation and communication of performance plans.

(1) Individual performance plans will be established and communicated in writing within 30 days of the beginning of each appraisal period.

(2) Performance plans shall be reestablished or revised each time a work assignment changes significantly, whether or not the work assignment requires a personnel action. Employees must be informed and participate in any revision and changes made to their written performance plans.

(3) Individual performance plans will be established and communicated in writing to the employee within 30 days of an employee's assignment to a position (e.g., promotion, reassignment, appointment).

(4) All performance plans and changes must be submitted to the reviewing official for approval. Reviews of performance plans are to ensure appropriate levels of quality and difficulty of performance standards within each employee's plan. In most cases the reviewing official is the second level supervisor. State Directors are authorized to serve as the reviewing official for any field position reporting directly to them except Program Chiefs and District Directors. This responsibility should be redelegated to an appropriate employee (e.g., Administrative Officer or Program Chief) to perform the reviewing official functions required by this paragraph and section 2060.9 (f) of this Instruction. Performance plans for District Directors and Program Chiefs will be sent to the National Office for review. The reviewing official for District Directors is the Deputy Administrator for Program Operations; and for Chiefs, the Assistant Administrator for the appropriate program area.

(b) Employee participation in establishing performance plans.

Supervisors and managers have a major responsibility to ensure consistency, objectivity, and equity in the development of performance elements and standards and the subsequent appraisal of performance against these standards. Elements and standards must be based on the requirements of the employee's position. Communication between the supervisor and the employee is essential in this process. The identification of performance elements and the establishment of performance standards require joint

participation of the supervisor and the employee in developing performance plans. Final authority for establishing elements and standards rests with the supervisory officials. Joint participation may be accomplished by means including, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) Employee and supervisor discuss and develop performance plan together.
- (2) Employee provides supervisor a draft performance plan.
- (3) Employee comments on draft performance plan prepared by the supervisor; or
- (4) Employees who occupy similar positions prepare Performance plan(s) with supervisor's approval.

(c) Performance elements.

- (1) Method of identifying performance elements. Performance elements are established using position descriptions, work plans, instructions, project proposals, goals, targets, job analysis, equal employment opportunity action plans, individual development plans and any other source that assigns or fixes responsibility for accomplishment. Accomplishment of organizational objectives should be included in performance plans by incorporating objectives, goals, program plans, workplans or by other means that account for program results.
- (2) Number of Elements. At least three elements must be used, but normally no more than ten elements will be used.
- (3) Use of Subelements. Subelements may not be used. This restriction does not preclude further specification of work within an element as long as only one rating level is assigned for element.
- (4) Identification. The elements identified under a performance plan for a position should usually be

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reflected in an adequately described position and should generally encompass the major duties and responsibilities of the position. Critical elements must be included, but not all elements may be critical. At least one noncritical element must be used.

(d) Performance standards. Performance standards will be written to describe the Fully Successful level of performance. Fully Successful performance is performance of good quality, wherein the employee produces the expected quantity of work and meets deadlines or schedules for completion of work. The absence of a written standard at the "Exceeds" Fully Successful level or the "Does Not Meet" Fully Successful level does not preclude the assignment of a rating at those levels.

(e) Performance plans. Performance plans should include the following issues as appropriate to the duties and responsibilities of the specific. The issue may be identified as a separate element or standard or as a specifically identifiable part of a larger element or standard. Sample standards for these duties are included in Exhibit B.

- (1) Equal Opportunity.
- (2) Management Controls. (Revised 04-30-96, SPECIAL PN.)
- (3) Executive, Management, Supervisory Development.
- (4) Public Information.
- (5) Management of Inventory Property.

(f) Generic performance plans. Generic elements and performance standards are included as Exhibit B to this Instruction for those positions where there are a large number of similar positions throughout the agency. These performance plans should be tailored to meet the specific requirements of a particular position. Offices may wish to develop other generic standards for use on a local basis.

(g) Documentation. All Performance elements and standards must be described in writing at the beginning of the appraisal cycle. Performance plans will be documented on Forms AD-435A and AD-435B, Performance Plan, Progress Review and Appraisal Worksheet and include the designation of critical and noncritical elements.

§2060.8 Progress reviews.

(a) Supervisors are responsible for monitoring employee performance against performance standards throughout the rating period and should provide on-going feedback to the employee about the level and quality of performance.

(b) A formal progress review should be held at the midpoint of the appraisal cycle. The purpose of the progress review is to advise employees of current performance. The review is also used to ensure that critical and noncritical elements and performance standards are appropriate and current. Key points of the performance discussion should be documented on Form AD-435A.

§2060.9 Appraising performance.

(a) Normal performance period. The normal performance appraisal period is from July 1 through June 30 of each year. (See DPM 430 for SES employees.) Ratings of performance will be completed within one month of the end of the appraisal year.

(1) Ratings may only be based on actual employee accomplishments and presumptive ratings of record are prohibited. If a rating is needed for a specific purpose such as within-grade increase, merit increases, or reduction-in-force, and there is no current rating of record, a rating will be made in accordance with the instructions governing the section which requires the rating.

(2) A formal appraisal may not be given unless elements and standards were established and communicated to the employee and the employee has served under those elements and standards for a minimum of 90 days.

(b) Documentation of accomplishments. At the end of the appraisal period, the supervisor with administrative responsibility for the employee documents accomplishments. Accomplishments may be documented on Form AD-435A/B or on bond paper attached to Form AD-435A/B. Documentation is

required for each element appraised at "Does Not Meet" or "Exceeds." This meets the requirement of DFM 430 for documentation for a summary rating of "Outstanding". The documentation must show clearly and specifically how the employee's performance exceeded or failed to meet the fully successful standard. If performance is at the "Fully Successful" level, no documentation is required.

(c) Appraising elements. Each performance element is appraised using one of the following element rating levels:

- (1) Exceeds. Performance exceeds the performance standards established for the Fully Successful level.
- (2) Fully Successful. Performance meets the performance standards established for the Fully Successful level.
- (3) Does Not Meet. Performance falls below the performance standards established at the Fully Successful Level.

(d) Summary ratings. Once the elements are appraised, the summary rating is calculated using the "Decision Table" (see Exhibit A). Definitions of the five possible summary rating levels are as follows:

- (1) "Unacceptable" - Performance which fails to meet established "Fully Successful" performance standards in one or more critical elements of the employee's position. When performance is "Unacceptable", corrective action must be taken consistent with required procedures.
- (2) "Marginal" - Performance which needs improvement to achieve the "Fully Successful" level. This may be evidenced by the need for close supervisory review, discussion and correction of work products.
- (3) "Fully Successful" - Performance which is of good quality. A Fully Successful employee produces the expected quantity of work and meets deadlines or schedules for completion of work.
- (4) "Superior" - Performance of unusually good or excellent quality. A Superior employee produces a very high quantity of work ahead of established schedules or deadlines and with less than normal supervision.

(5) "Outstanding" - Performance of rare, very high quality. An Outstanding employee produces an exceptional quantity of work significantly ahead of established schedules or deadlines and with very little supervision. Performance for each element consistently exceeds the Fully Successful level.

(e) Weights. The weighting of critical and noncritical elements is built into the Decision Table through the use of appraisal units, and automatically occurs when the Decision Table is used to convert element ratings to the summary rating. Critical elements are assigned two appraisal units and noncritical elements are assigned one appraisal unit.

(f) Review procedures.

(1) Ratings of record must be documented in writing and must be reviewed and approved by a higher level manager. Reviewing officials for ratings are the same as for the reviewing official for performance plans. (See 2060.7 (a)(4).) Ratings may not be communicated to employees prior to approval by the final reviewer. This does not preclude discussions between supervisor and employee about performance prior to the determination of the rating of record. Supervisors should submit Forms AD-435, Performance Appraisal, and AD-435A/B, Performance Plan, Progress Review and Appraisal Worksheet, to the reviewing official.

(2) An employee's performance rating may be changed by the rating official; however

(i) Prior to any change, an attempt should be made to settle any differences between the rater and the reviewing official.

(ii) Changes made must be consistent with the performance standards.

(g) Multiple appraisals. Multiple appraisals of performance made during the appraisal period must be combined or considered in deriving the employee's next rating of record.

(1) Details and temporary promotions.

(i) Performance elements and standards shall be established for employees who are detailed or

§2060.9 (g)(1)(i) (Con.)

temporarily promoted for 120 days or more to other positions in the agency or the Department. The supervisor responsible for the detail or temporary promotion shall prepare elements and standards and communicate them in writing to the employee within 30 days of the start of the assignment. A summary rating shall be prepared to document the employee's accomplishments at the end of the assignment and must be considered in deriving the employee's next rating of record.

(ii) When details are less than 120 days in duration, written performance elements and standards are not required, but some documented record of performance should be kept.

(iii) When employees are detailed outside the Department, the employing agency must make a reasonable effort to obtain appraisal information from the outside organization.

(2) Change in supervisors. When an employee works under different supervisors during the appraisal period, each supervisor of 90 days or more shall prepare a summary rating and forward it for appropriate consideration to the employee's supervisor.

(3) Position changes. When an employee changes positions during the appraisal period, and the employee has served for the minimum appraisal period in the position from which he/she has changed, a summary rating shall be prorated.

(4) Transfer of rating. If an employee moves to a new agency, department or new organization in the employing agency at any time during the appraisal period, the current performance ratings of record must be transferred, as required by {2060.13(b) of this Instruction. A summary rating must be prepared which must be taken into consideration by the gaining agency or department when deriving the next rating of record.

(h) Inability to rate. When a rating of record cannot be prepared at the time specified by this plan, the appraisal period shall be extended for the amount of time necessary to meet the minimum appraisal period, at which time a rating of record shall be prepared. (Revised 03-20-96, PN 259.)

(i) Appraising disabled veterans. The performance appraisal and resulting rating of a disabled veteran may not be lowered because the veteran has been absent from work to seek medical treatment as provided in Executive Order 5396.

(j) Conversion. When an employee's position is converted from another Federal Pay System with no change in duties or responsibilities, the employee's rating of record will be considered to have been based on the position which the employee occupies after the conversion and for all other purposes under this chapter.

(k) Collateral duties. Employees performing officially assigned collateral duties should be given performance appraisals which reflect both their primary duties and responsibilities and the collateral duties. This is a joint responsibility of the primary supervisor and the collateral duty supervisor.

(l) Employee's certification. The supervisor shall review the rating of record with the employee. The employee's signature on the Form AD-435 shall serve as certification that such a discussion took place. If this discussion cannot be held, the supervisor shall document the reason on Form AD-435.

§2060.10 Grievances.

Grievances of performance appraisals shall be handled using the administrative grievance procedure or applicable negotiated grievance procedures. (Revised 03-20-96, PN 259.)

§2060.11 Uses of performance appraisals.

The following pertains to the use of performance appraisals as a basis for specified actions.

(a) Within-grade increase (WGI). Eligible employees may be granted WGI's when the employee's summary rating is "Fully Successful" or better. The decision to grant or withhold a WGI is based upon the employee's "rating of record" within the appropriate rating period. When a WGI decision is not consistent with the employee's most recent rating of record, a more current rating of record must be prepared. See RD Instruction 2054-A for further guidance.

(b) Promotion. Performance ratings shall be considered in evaluating employees for promotion and reassignment to positions with greater promotion potential. No employee shall receive a career promotion unless his/her current rating of record is Fully Successful or higher. Supervisors and employees should be aware, however, that a Fully Successful performance rating is not the only criteria for promotion.

(c) Training and development. The performance appraisal process may be used as a basis for determining the training needs of employees.

(d) Performance bonuses. Performance ratings shall be used as a basis for performance bonuses. For performance bonuses, see RD Instruction 2063-B. (Revised 09-04-96, PN 265.)

(e) Reduction-in-force (RIF). Performance ratings are used to establish service credit for RIF purposes. For RIF Purposes, rating of record means an annual summary rating required at the time specified in this plan. An employee will not be assigned a new rating of record for the sole purpose of affecting his or her retention standing. Performance ratings that were due before the date of specific RIF notices but were not officially approved and put on record until after the date of the specific notices are not used to determine additional service credit.

(f) Less than "Fully Successful" performance. Supervisors shall assist employees in improving less than "Fully Successful" performance. Such assistance may include, but is not limited to formal training, on-the-job training, counseling, and closer supervision. If performance is "Unacceptable" in one or more critical elements of the job, the supervisor shall inform the employee, in writing, as soon as the "Unacceptable" performance is apparent, inform the employee of standards that must be met for "Fully Successful" performance, and provide the employee a reasonable opportunity period to demonstrate "Fully Successful" performance. (Revised 03-20-96, PN 259.)

§2060.12 Training and evaluation.

- (a) All employees will receive a copy of the FmHA Performance Appraisal Plan. Supervisors and reviewing officials will receive training in carrying out their responsibilities under the plan.
- (b) Periodic evaluations of the performance appraisal process will be made through management evaluation processes.

§2060.13 Forms and records.

- (a) Appraisal forms. Appraisals conducted under this plan must be recorded on Form AD-435, and copies provided to the employee and supervisor. Performance elements and standards will be documented on Form AD-435A/B.
- (b) Records. In addition to the procedures set forth in 5 CFR Part 293, the following procedures govern the establishment and maintenance of performance appraisal records:
 - (1) All records maintained must meet the requirements of 5 CFR Part 297 as well as any Departmental provisions of the Privacy and Freedom of Information Act.
 - (2) Performance ratings of record and the performance plans on which the ratings are based must be filed in the employee's Official Personnel Folder (OPF) on the left side.
 - (3) When the OPF of an employee is sent to another servicing personnel office in the employing agency, to another agency or department, or to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), the "losing" servicing personnel office shall include in the OPF all performance ratings of record that are 3 years old or less including the performance plan on which the most recent rating was based and the summary rating prepared when the employee changes positions. Also, the "losing" office will purge from the OPF or Employee Performance File all performance ratings and plans that are more than 3 years old, and other performance-related documents.

§§2060.14 - 2060.50 [Reserved]

Attachments: Exhibits A, B, and C.

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RD Instruction 2060-A
Exhibit A

DECISION TABLE

SUMMARY RATING LEVELS	
UNACCEPTABLE	One or more critical elements are appraised at "DOES NOT MEET"
MARGINAL	More appraisal units are st "DOES NOT MEET" than at "EXCEEDS"
FULLY SUCCESSFUL	Any combination of appraisal units which falls between "SUPERIOR" and "MARGINAL"
SUPERIOR	More appraisal units are at "EXCEEDS" than at "FULLY SUCCESSFUL" but none are below "FULLY SUCCESSFUL"
OUTSTANDING	All appraisal units are at "EXCEEDS"

Critical element = 2 appraisal units
Noncritical element - 1 appraisal unit

Instructions:

1. If any critical element is appraised at the "DOES NOT MEET" level; this is an "UNACCEPTABLE" rating.
2. If all elements are appraised at "EXCEEDS", this is an "OUTSTANDING" rating.
3. If neither of these conditions are met, compare the appraisal values at each of the three element rating levels to the appraisal unit combinations listed in the Decision Table and assign the proper rating.

See examples on next page.

Exh A pg 2 not automated see manual

ISSUE: Equal Opportunity

USDA is fully committed to the purpose and objectives of Equal Opportunity. Accordingly, every employee is expected to carry out his/her responsibilities in this area in a fully successful manner. The following performance standard is applicable for supervisory positions in all program divisions in the National Office and with minor modifications, all management divisions and field positions as well.

POSITIONS: All supervisory/managerial positions.

FORMAT: Equal Opportunity should be a separate performance element for managerial positions. For lower level supervisory positions Equal Opportunity may be incorporated into a larger element dealing with supervisory responsibilities.

PERFORMANCE ELEMENT: Equal Opportunity Responsibilities

PERFORMANCE STANDARD: Fully Successful

Implement the current policies of the Agencies' EEO program in selecting/hiring, job design, training, awards, career enhancement program, performance evaluations and promotion. Is responsible for fostering understanding to ensure that established goals under the Agencies' Affirmative Action Plan are met. This includes identifying barriers to accomplish EEO objectives and recommending remedial action to eliminate such barriers, participate in resolving EEO complaints. Assures that program regulations and other policies do not conflict with Civil Rights laws. Spot check compliance with Agencies' Equal Opportunity regulations 1910-A & 1901-E, during field assessments and reviews. Coordinate responses and corrective actions with the EO Staff if and when apparent problems arise.

ISSUE: Management Control Activities Under OMB Circular A-123

The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982, and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123, requires agencies to establish management control systems to protect program operations from fraud, waste, and mismanagement. Management controls are the checks and balances by which an agency ensures that it accomplishes its mission and safeguards the public's resources. Two broad categories of controls, accounting and administrative, are identified. Accounting controls relate to the safeguarding of financial assets and reliability of financial reports. Administrative or management controls generally apply to activities leading to the authorization of transactions or events. Accounting controls focus on the financial management areas while administrative controls focus on program performance and the economy and efficiency of operations.

POSITIONS: National Office: All SES employees, GM employees, and Management Control Officers.

Field: All State Directors, Program Chiefs, District Directors, Administrative Officers, and Management Control Officers and any other GM positions.

FORMAT: In most cases standards for management control will be incorporated into appropriate critical elements. Individual management control elements may be established where appropriate because of the duties of a given position.

PERFORMANCE ELEMENT: The standards listed below for management control responsibility are to be incorporated into the standards for individual critical elements where they would be appropriate. These include elements dealing with program responsibility where it is important to maintain controls to assure that: (a) obligations and costs are in compliance with applicable law; (b) funds, property, and other assets are safeguarded against waste, loss, unauthorized use, or misappropriations; and (c) revenues and expenditures applicable to program operations are properly recorded and accounted for to permit the preparation of accounts and reliable financial and statistical reports and to maintain accountability over assets. The standards may also apply to such other activities as time and attendance reporting, monitoring overtime usage, accuracy of position descriptions, following proper contracting procedures, loan making and servicing and similar activities.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD: Fully Successful

Management controls are in place and operating.

Management control systems meet OMB, GAO, OPM and USDA guidelines.

Management controls reports are submitted at the required time and contain all required information.

Corrective actions are taken to reduce or eliminate deficiencies leading to potential or actual loss of resources.

ISSUE: Executive, Management and Supervisory Development (EMS)

The EMS development program provides a systematic process whereby Agency EMS employees can master the supervisory and managerial knowledges, skills and abilities (KSA's) necessary for performing official duties and responsibilities of their assigned positions and for improving Agency effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the capability for responding flexibly to new and changing demands. The development program is a positive strategy for increasing managerial excellence.

Supervisors of EMS employees are responsible for:

- (1) Conducting EMS development conferences with all EMS employees under their direct supervision.
- (2) Assuring that the general process and procedures by which individual EMS development needs are determined and development activities selected are followed.

Additional information on the EMS development program can be found in RD Instruction 2057-G.

POSITIONS: Immediate supervisors of all EMS employees.

FORMAT: Standards describing fully successful performance of EMS Development responsibilities should be included in performance elements that deal with supervisory responsibilities.

PERFORMANCE ELEMENT: Assures that all directly supervised EMS employees possess the EMS KSA's necessary to perform the official duties and responsibilities of their assigned positions.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD: Fully Successful

All directly supervised EMS employees possess all critical EMS KSA's at a satisfactory level of proficiency.

ISSUE: Public Information Activities

Good relations with the public is a critical aspect of Agency positions, particularly in the field. Every employee is expected to provide prompt and courteous service to the public in a fully successful manner.

POSITIONS: County Supervisors, Assistant County Supervisors, District Directors, and with some modification, all other positions having public contact as a major portion of their work.

FORMAT: A standard describing Fully Successful performance for public information activities should be separate performance element for affected positions.

PERFORMANCE ELEMENT: Public Information

PERFORMANCE STANDARD: Fully Successful

Promotes and demonstrates a cooperative and courteous attitude in working with representatives of the business community, other Government agencies, other agricultural and private sector lenders, applicants, borrowers, and coworkers. Attends public meetings when appropriate to explain or discuss Agency local programs and policies. Utilizes news media to inform the public and potential applicants of available programs. Responds to adverse publicity in a manner which improves public understanding of agency programs and policies.

ISSUE: Management of Inventory Property

The increasing number of property in inventory has placed unusual emphasis on the efficient and timely maintenance and sale of the property. The Office of the Inspector General has issued a recommendation that management of inventory property be included as a critical job element for State, District, and County employees, especially in localities where inventories are high.

POSITIONS: State, District, and County employees in localities where the State Director determines the performance standard and performance element are appropriate.

FORMAT: Management of inventory property can be represented by a separate performance standard and performance element or can be incorporated as part of another appropriate performance element.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD: Fully Successful

Properties in inventory are managed to protect the interest of the Government and disposed of in an expeditious manner.

Exh C not automated see manual